

focus ON...

We talk to Les Harris who delivers the Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership and the Level 2 Award in Community Sports Leadership to disaffected 14-19 year olds

Les Harris attended a Sports Leaders UK Tutor Training day this year as a member of The Bradford Tomorrow Project. The charity's aim is to help, educate and develop the physical, mental and spiritual capacities of young people whose circumstances put them at risk of coming into conflict with the Criminal Justice System. Les delivers the Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership and the Level 2 Award in Community Sports Leadership to 14-19 year olds in the Bradford and Keighley area who are most at risk of offending, drug misuse, anti-social behaviour or not in mainstream education. *The Leader* finds out more...

Q Why do you think Sports Leaders UK courses are so crucial?

A With both the qualifications we run, the units that focus on fair play and the roles of the official in sport are excellent vehicles for putting the theory behind conflict resolution into a very practical and hands-on context.

Q Why are conflict management skills valuable to young people?

A A lot of young people in our community are likely to encounter potentially volatile

Good sports: Les and colleague Abi from the Bradford Tomorrow Project, which is funded by Comic Relief



situations in their lives that, if they're not equipped with the personal skills to deal with effectively, can easily escalate to involve violence or other forms of anti-social behaviour. These are vital skills with the potential to be life-saving.

Q What are the most important things to bear in mind when tutors are planning to run a Sports Leaders UK course?

A Timetabling is key to giving the Sports Leaders the opportunity to lead groups who are younger. For example, my Year 10 Sports Leaders at Carlton Bolling College, Bradford, lead groups of Year 7 pupils and today they're focusing on striking and fielding activities during their PE lessons. This provides an opportunity for their 60 minutes supervised leadership to be undertaken in a safe and controlled environment.

Q Any other tips?

A In May, I spent a week with some of my Sports Leaders on an outdoor activity camp in the Lake District. The trip was a reward for those who undertook and completed their Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership. During the day, the Sports Leaders participated in a range of

self-development activities such as hill-walking, abseiling and climbing. Each evening I led a workshop on developing conflict resolution skills. These sessions allowed the Sports Leaders to reflect on the day's activity, to consider ways in which they overcame obstacles or solved problems and consider how they could utilise the same skills in day-to-day life. As a method of creating sustainable volunteering opportunities, I have also set up a database of the Sports Leaders who are keen to continue volunteering, which can be accessed by local youth groups and community schemes. I've already had a number of enquiries for possible sports leadership opportunities and am very positive that the local groups will take advantage of this fantastic resource of young leaders we have.

Q How have you applied the understanding you gained from the recent English Federation of Disability Sport training at Newcastle?

A It gave me ideas for games that I could use that sustain the group's interest. We often use what I like to call 'energiser' games at the start of a session that can then be used as a focal point to consider how we applied mediation or conflict resolution skills when the circumstance arose during the game itself.

Sports Leaders UK courses teach vital skills that have the potential to be life-saving